

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 7th March 2016 at 7.45 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Claridge (until the point indicated in the minutes), Gosling, Kelly, Lain-Rose, Manning, Perry, Reardon, Spearink and Burnham who was in the Chair.

Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Butcher, Sharp and Silkin whose apologies were accepted.

URGENT ITEM: - Councillors agreed to take one item of urgent business relating to proposals for alterations to the A229-Headcorn Road-Marden Road crossroads.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:-

Lobbying – Councillor Buller declared she had been lobbied about the Neighbourhood Plan, Local Plan and Village Clean-Up.

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interest in Items on the Agenda – none declared.

Requests for Dispensation – none requested.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Minute pages 1507-1510 of 15th February 2016 were proposed for approval by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Gosling, APPROVED by Councillors, signed by Councillor Burnham and made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.

CORRESPONDENCE & CURRENT ISSUES for noting or decision:-

1. Urgent Item - A229-Headcorn Road-Marden Road crossroads – Councillor Perry stated that as a borough and parish councillor he had received copies of consultant Mott MacDonald's reports which contained analysis of and proposals for the crossroads, particularly in the context of housing developments proposed on Headcorn Road and KCC objections. He said that MBC was looking at solutions that could address the objections. Councillors voiced their opposition to suggestions that pavements could be narrowed or rerouted completely and that additional traffic lanes could be accommodated within the parameters of existing highways land. They expressed grave concern at the consultants' statement that to achieve a feasible redesign of the crossroads 'non-motorised users may have to be negatively affected', an approach which was completely at variance with the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan and the Regulation 19 Maidstone Local Plan's self-proclaimed promotion of alternative modes of travel. They questioned the credibility of an approach that relied on achieving hitherto unproven changes in residents' behaviour to reduce or redirect their journeys. They noted that scenarios had been remodelled to produce lower 'degree of saturation' levels but felt that the figures were still unacceptable, noting that values over 85% are typically regarded as suffering from congestion and a value of 100% means demand and capacity are equal with no further traffic able to progress through the junction. Councillor Perry said he was due to attend meetings with MBC and KCC on the consultants' proposals. Proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Buller, Councillors RESOLVED to write to the Chief Executive of Maidstone Borough Council to express the above concerns, such letter also to include a Freedom of Information request to disclose details of correspondence between MBC and the owners of land at the southwest corner of the crossroads between Chestnut Avenue and the High Street.

2. Consultation (1) – Maidstone Borough Local Plan and Integrated Transport Strategy – Closing Date 18th March – Discussion of draft response. For decision per Min 1508. Plan documents available at www.maidstone.gov.uk/localplan. *Councillor Burnham closed the meeting to allow contributions from members of the public.* A resident commented that he was disappointed that the draft Local Plan made scant reference to Neighbourhood Plans and lacked precision in what he felt was often woolly treatment of its subject matter. He highlighted that policy H1(50) treated Fishers Farm as having single access rather than acknowledging the separate applications submitted by two developers. He felt that development creation of green space was a hollow gesture given the green space already existed. He said he was similarly unimpressed by the Integrated Transport Strategy which he felt was very limited and badly thought through. *Councillor Burnham reopened the meeting.* Councillors complimented Councillor Burnham on the first draft of the Parish Council's proposed response to the consultation, which had been circulated to councillors before the meeting and made available in hard copy to attending members of the public. Councillors made the following suggestions: amend or delete reference to a second vehicle access in discussion of Policy H1(51); include a specific reference to the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan; include reference to Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan policy GW1 relating to the station in discussion of Local Plan policy DM24; also in discussion of Local Plan policy DM24 stress the inadequacy of cycle path and footpath provision; highlight the infrastructure needs identified in Neighbourhood Plan policy PW1 and in parallel highlight constraints which are considered a barrier to development; include with the submitted comments evidence of how SPC has previously raised issues relating to infrastructure and constraints. *Councillor Claridge left the meeting at this point.*
3. Neighbourhood Plan – Verbal Update on Examination Status (Steering Group) (for information). Councillors noted that Feria Urbanism was working on additional information for inclusion in the Basic Conditions Statement. The Clerk and Councillor Reardon said they were investigating the availability of statistics to illustrate website activity relating to the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors asked for an indication from Feria Urbanism of when its work would be completed.
4. Borough Council Report – (JP) Councillor Perry said he felt it was critical that the Neighbourhood Plan proceed to referendum as soon as possible.
5. Caretaker's Report – The Clerk said the Caretaker had commented on the waterlogged state of a good part of the field. Councillor Perry said that although MBC had stated it would offer only a long lease rather than freehold he would raise the subject with the relevant department one more time.
6. Consultation (2) - Technical consultation on implementation of planning changes - closing date 15/04/16 (for comment). Councillors DEFERRED discussion until the meeting on 21st March.
7. Parish Surgery – Reports on surgeries since 27th February (TB/AG/AS) (for information). Subjects raised were: Youth Council; verges at Bell Lane; A229 crossroads; solar installations; dog fouling; Nicholson Walk. AGREED: issues at Bell Lane and Nicholson Walk are to be pursued with MBC; contact to be made with Kent Highways management to seek information about appointment of new highways steward and to arrange meeting.
8. Planning Appeals by Parish Councils – Invitation from NALC/KALC to support on-line petition <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/110489> (for decision). Councillors NOTED the invitation to sign the on-line petition that asked the government to give parish councils the right to appeal planning decisions in the same way the right is extended to applicants. They NOTED that the petition was open only to British citizens and UK residents.

9. Standing Orders – Proposal to amend Parish Council standing orders to facilitate voting by signed ballot in agreed circumstances (for decision). With two abstentions Councillors RESOLVED: Standing order 3q - insert new sentence (shown in italics) at the end of the current wording: 'Voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question and to show which councillor(s) abstained. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda. *The option exists for a vote to be held by a signed ballot upon agreement to a motion received on the night and proposed and seconded appropriately.*' Standing order 10a – following amendment to standing order 3q, insert in the list after item 10a ii a new item as 10a iii: '*to hold a vote by signed ballot*'. Subsequent items to be consequently renumbered.
10. Trees in the Village Competition 2016 – Invitation from The Kent Men of the Trees (for decision). Councillors AGREED not to enter the competition this year but to reconsider once responsibility for the new open space had been assumed from Taylor Wimpey.
11. Village Clean-Up – Update on arrangements for 12th March (JB & TB) (for information). Councillor Buller encouraged as many as possible to join the Clean-Up on 12th March. Councillors noted that the landlord of the Parade had instigated work to attend to overgrown plants and recorded thanks to Borough Councillor Brice for her help in facilitating the work. Councillors AGREED that a donation be given to the WI and to the Youth Club in recognition of their support of the event.
12. Youth Council – Report on investigations (SL-R) (Min 1506 & 1508) (for decision). Proposed by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Councillor Gosling, Councillors AGREED nem con to the recommendations in Councillor Lain-Rose's report dated 26th February: Staplehurst Parish Council AGREES to establish the 'Staplehurst Youth Parish Council'; Councillor Lain-Rose will use resources from the British Youth Council and other sources to formulate a scheme that reflects the Parish of Staplehurst; Councillor Lain-Rose to work with some young people within the village to enable them to take ownership of this project. Councillors NOTED that a DBS check would be appropriate at a cost of up to £60, based on Kent County Council's website.

COMMITTEE & FOCUS GROUPS – Reports and recommendations:-

1. Local Transport (TB, BM, PS) Next meeting 15/04/16. Minutes of meeting 12/02/16 posted at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst_transport.aspx
2. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team (JB, PB, RS, PS) Next meeting 23/03/16. Report of meeting 20/01/16 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kcc_emergency_planning_group.aspx
3. Planning Committee (PB, MA, JB, CC, TB, AG, PK, RS, PS) http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx Councillor Buller volunteered to speak at MBC Planning Committee on 17th March should the application for the Bovis Homes development at Fishers Farm appear on the agenda. Councillors AGREED to monitor the position of the Stanley Farm application (Headcorn Road) and review at their next meeting the possible need for representation at an April MBC Planning Committee meeting.
4. Allotments Project Group (TB, PK, JB, BM) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups_1.aspx
5. Strategy & Policy Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, CC, SL, RS) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/policy_group.aspx
6. Finance Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SL, JR) Next meeting 29/04/16. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance_group.aspx.
7. Economic & Tourism Development (PS) Next meeting?
8. Oliver Road Open Space (PK, SL, AS, PS) Next meeting? Councillors AGREED that the Clerk should arrange a meeting with Taylor Wimpey to discuss handover considerations. Councillors Burnham, Kelly, Lain-Rose and Spearink indicated they wished to be involved in such a meeting. The Clerk reported that he had investigated ownership structures and would circulate his note to interested councillors.

9. Playscheme (TB, JB) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/youth_activities_1.aspx
10. Publicity & Website Group (TB, PK, MA, JB, CC, SL, JR) Next meeting 22/03/16. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/publicity_website.aspx Councillor Buller reported that the Parish Magazine would like to feature a monthly Parish Councillor profile. Councillor Spearink volunteered to prepare an item for the first profile.
11. Rural Settlement Group (JP, JB, TB, AS) Next meeting 09/03/16. Report of meeting 03/02/16 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx.
12. Staff Group (JB, PK, SL, BM, JP) Next meeting?
13. Staplehurst Village Centre Development Group (TB, AG, SL) Next meeting 10/03/16. Report of meeting 25/02/16 posted at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village_centre_redevelopment_group.aspx Councillor Lain-Rose gave the Clerk a hard copy of the surveyor's report on the Village Centre, which is to be held in the Parish Office for reference purposes. He commented that the report incorrectly states (page 11) that the building is owned by the Parish Council.
14. Surrenden Playing Field Group (TB, PK, BM, JR, AS) Next meeting? <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
15. Village Enhancement Group (TB, PK, JB, PB, JR, AS) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups.aspx
16. Youth Club (PK) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_youth_club.aspx The Youth Worker's report dated 22/02/16 had been distributed to Councillors and made available to attending members of the public and was NOTED by Councillors.

REPORTS FOR NOTING from local community groups:-

1. Carnival & Fete (SL, BM) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_carnival_fete_committee.aspx
2. Churchyard Liaison (PB, PK) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups_2.aspx
3. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee (JP, BM) Next meeting 08/03/16. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn_aerodrome.aspx
4. Jubilee Field Management & Users Group (JP, PB, PK) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee_fields_users_group.aspx
5. KALC Area Committee (RS, PK, PB, JP) Next meeting? Report of meeting 24/02/16 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kent_association_of_local_councils.aspx
6. Kent Community Alcohol Partnership (PB) Next meeting?
7. Knoxbridge A229 Residents' Group (BM, PS) Next meeting?
8. McCabe Day Centre (JB) Next meeting? Reports of meetings 23/09/15 and 22/10/15 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/mccabe_day_centre.aspx
9. Neighbourhood Watch (JB) http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
10. Police/Parish Liaison (PB, BM, AS) Next meeting? Report of meeting 24/09/15 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
11. River Beult Catchment Improvement Group (JP, PS) Next meeting? <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
12. Sobell Cheshire Home (JP, PS) Next meeting 07/06/16. Report of meeting 01/03/16 awaited. <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
13. Speed Watch (JB) <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/speedwatch.aspx>
14. Staplehurst Community Hub (JB) Next meeting?
15. Staplehurst Library Users Group (JB, BM) Next meeting?
16. Staplehurst Patients' Participation Group (JB, AS, RS). Next meeting? Report of meeting 14/10/15 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/patient_participation_group_at_health_centre.aspx
17. Staplehurst Primary School Liaison (AG, SL, BM, JR)
18. Staplehurst Surface Water Management Plan Group (PS) Next meeting? Report of meeting 27/07/15 awaited.
19. Staplehurst Village Centre Trust (MA, RS) Next meeting? Reports of meetings 10/02/16 and 01/03/16 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village_centre_trust.aspx
20. Village Golf & Sports Club (PB) Next meeting? <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: Before the meeting a resident discussed his concerns about a proposal for reconfiguration of the A229-Marden Road-Headcorn Road crossroads to address issues raised by Kent Highways about Headcorn Road planning applications. He said he could not agree with the claim that leafleting would change behaviour sufficiently to reduce traffic flows and said that an equality impact assessment should be carried out. Another resident spoke about the lack of credibility of different traffic surveys (Mott MacDonald, Fishers Farm, Stanley Farm) which stated different figures and he proposed that a pedestrian survey should be carried out. Another resident commented on the Transport Accessibility Group minutes of 12th February and said he felt the number 5 bus service was still generally of a poor standard. He said that an MBC bus shelter had been removed; Councillor Perry said he would follow this up. The Clerk advised that MBC had published a website news item about its bus shelter replacement programme. After the meeting the Staplehurst Flood Warden reported that he had received no recent information about the Staplehurst Surface Water Management Plan; Councillors had not received any recent information either. The Community Warden spoke about a Men's Shed initiative and associated fundraising.